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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

23 November 1984

China: Defense Modernization on Parade

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Summary

Beijing's National Day Parade showcased many of China's recent advancements in conventional and nuclear weapons development and underlined the impressive progress made in defense modernization since the mid-1970s. China's dependence on foreign technology was apparent in many of the conventional weapons on display, despite Chinese statements emphasizing self-reliance in the development and production of these new systems. If produced and deployed in quantity, the weapons unveiled will go far to redress some, but certainly not all, of the critical deficiencies in China's defenses.

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New and Modified Conventional Weapons Displayed

Recent, unusually high Chinese media coverage of the military and the 1 October parade in Beijing highlighted the military advancements achieved under Deng Xiaoping's leadership and demonstrated the importance China's leaders place on displaying an increasingly capable military force to both domestic and foreign audiences.

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Defense Issues Branch, China Division, Office of East Asian Analysis. Information available as of 23 November 1984 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Defense Issues Branch, China Division, OEA, on [redacted]

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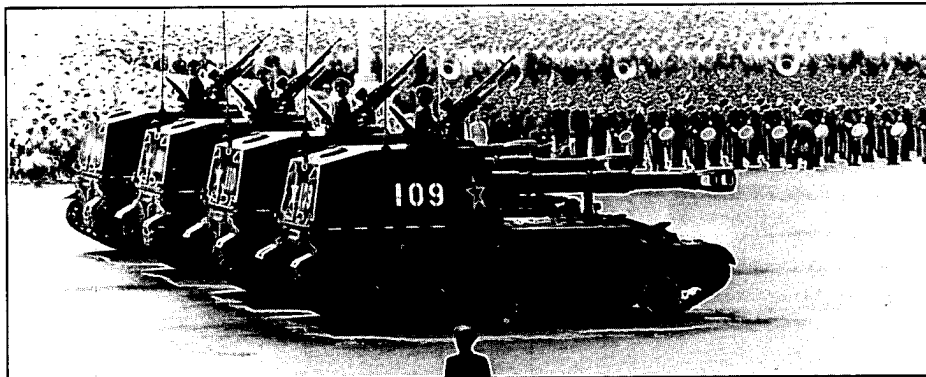
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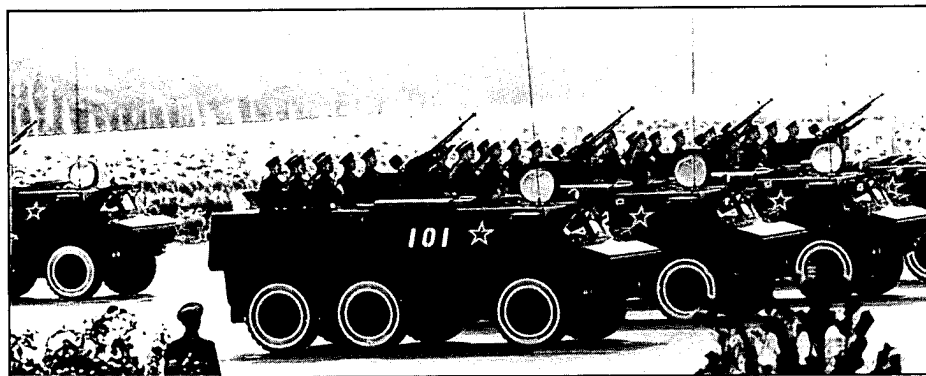
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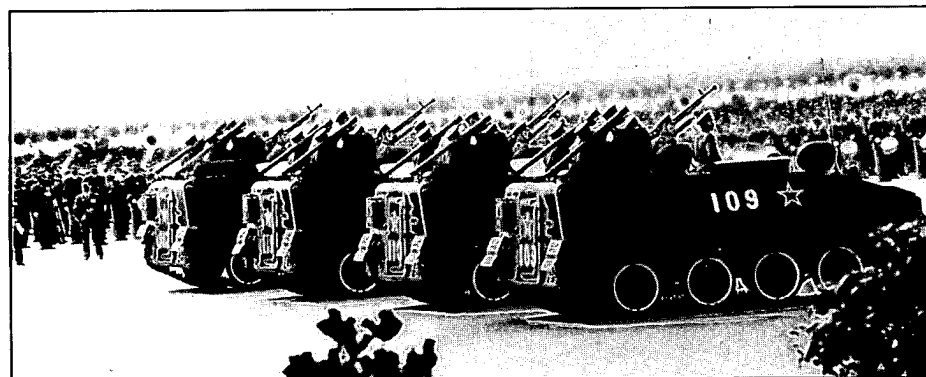
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China: Defense Modernization on Parade**152mm SP Gun Howitzer**

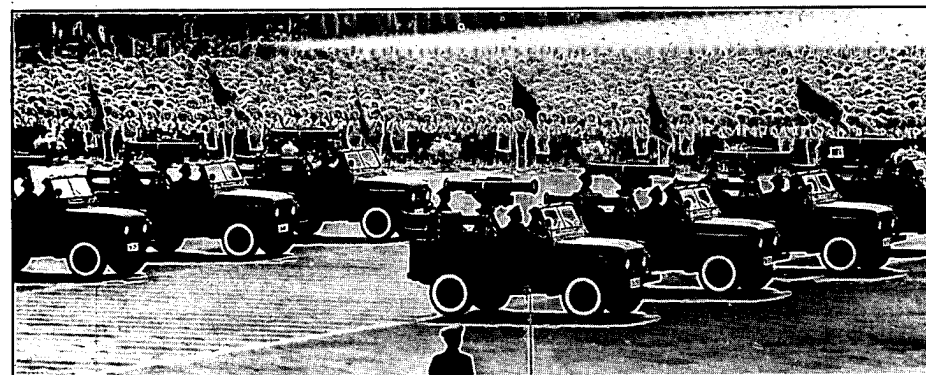
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**New Wheeled Amphibious Vehicle**

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**Hand-Held Surface-to-Air Missile**

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**Jeep-Mounted Anti-Tank Missile**

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[REDACTED]

The numerous new and modified weapons displayed during the parade underscore Beijing's determination to improve its defense against tanks, aircraft, and amphibious naval assaults. New conventional weapons included:

- o Self-propelled gun howitzers: The design of this system is based loosely on the Soviet 2S3 152mm SP howitzer. [REDACTED]

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the Chinese have been working on a prototype for at least two years, and we believe the system may be ready for series production. Its deployment would give Chinese units their first artillery piece with full armor protection for the crew, allowing greater mobility on the battlefield.

- o Wheeled armored personnel carriers: An amphibious armored vehicle with three axles, this vehicle appears to borrow from the Brazilian Urutu and the French VAB designs. The Chinese imported an Urutu in 1982 for testing and negotiated for acquisition of the production technology [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] This is China's first wheeled armored personnel carrier, a marked step forward for the Chinese, and because of its suspension, it is a better platform for air defense and antitank weapons than their tracked vehicle.

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- o Shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles: These short range missiles appear to be a direct copy of the Soviet SA-7. According to the US Defense Attache in Beijing, it has been in limited production over the past year.

- o Jeep-mounted antitank missiles: This system seems to be an attempt to improve the manually-guided missile currently used by Chinese forces. The new missile probably has semiautomatic guidance and is modeled after US TOW missiles China obtained from Vietnam. China's continued interest in US I-TOW/TOW II technology [REDACTED] however, indicate the new system is not yet operational and may be seriously flawed.

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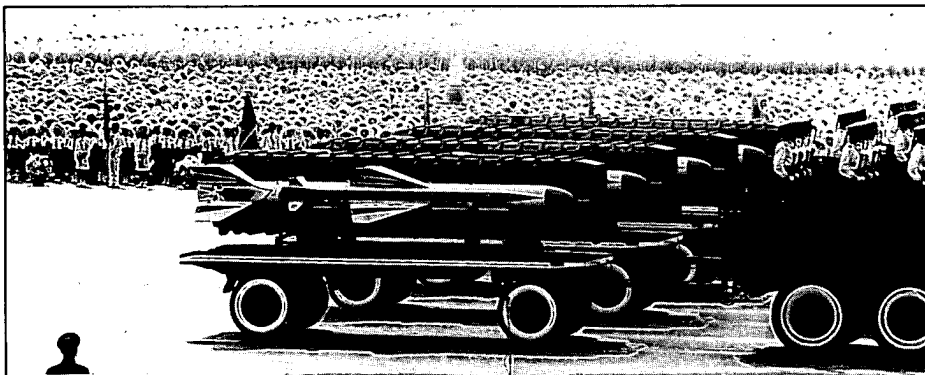
- o Shangyou-2 antiship missiles: This missile program is still in the testing phase. [REDACTED]

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Although the unveiling of new weapons discloses the advances being made in China's own research and development efforts on conventional weapons, the modifications noted on some older systems confirms that foreign acquisitions are playing a prominent role in weapons modernization efforts. A contingent of Type 69 tanks displayed in the parade, for example, was equipped with the British designed L-7 105mm guns wrapped in thermal sleeves. These tanks also carried a new optics system enclosed in a housing just forward of the commander's hatch. A group of Type 59 tanks mounted a similar gun without the thermal sleeve. [REDACTED]

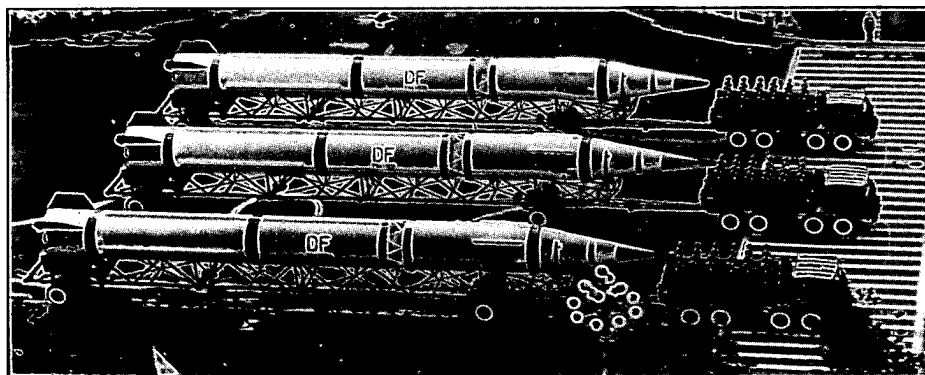
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China: Defense Modernization on Parade**Shangyou-2 Anti-Ship
Missile**

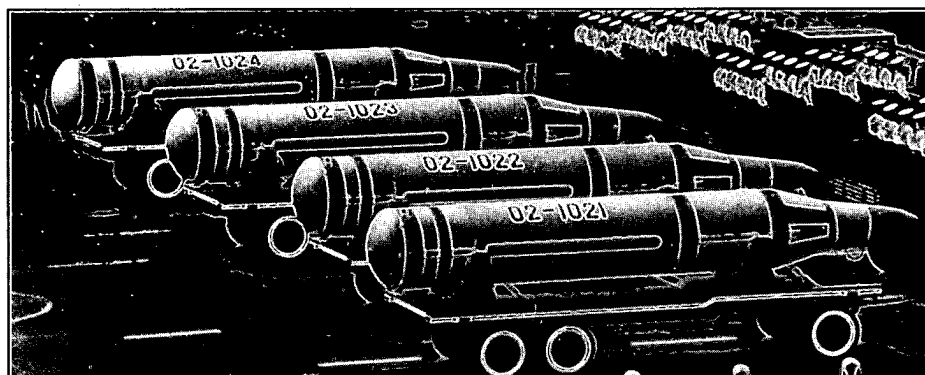
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**Type 69 Tank With Side
Skirts and 105mm Gun**

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**CSS-3 ICBM**

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**CSS-NX-3 SLBM**

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[REDACTED]

British firms have a long history of involvement in China's tank programs. Several years ago, Chinese tanks were shipped to the United Kingdom for prototype work on upgrade packages. [REDACTED]

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China also unveiled an improved version of its tracked armored personnel carrier. The new vehicle has a more powerful, West German air-cooled engine built under license by the Chinese as well as firing ports and a parapet to protect the machine gunner. Other variants of the new vehicle [REDACTED] include an ambulance and a command vehicle. [REDACTED]

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In addition to the conventional weapons, Beijing for the first time publicly displayed four of each of the CSS-2 intermediate range ballistic missiles, CSS-3 and CSS-4 ICBMs and CSS-NX-3 SLBM prototypes. A detailed study--now under way-- [REDACTED] will allow us to make accurate measurements and refine our estimates of missile and warhead performance. [REDACTED]

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Deficiencies Still Remain

If produced in quantity, the new generation of conventional weapons and equipment unveiled at the parade will alter somewhat the balance of forces along the Sino-Soviet border. The new mobile conventional systems, for example, if deployed in large numbers would improve China's ability to defend its territory on the modern battlefield. Beijing can also exploit its advances in conventional weapons development to expand its share of the world arms market, gaining more foreign exchange, political influence, and access to foreign weapons. Already selling more than \$6 billion in arms since beginning an "arms sales for profit" effort in 1980, China's more advanced weapons will probably attract new customers among the less developed countries. Greater foreign sales in turn will aid in the modernization of China's defense industries. The US Defense Attache in Beijing reports that defense plants are retaining perhaps as much as 50 percent of the profits from export sales. [REDACTED]

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The parade was also a visual reminder of the remarkable progress made by Deng Xiaoping over the past several years in improving the morale, domestic image, and professional status of the military. Cadets from the newly reopened and revitalized military academies took part in the parade, and participating units wore new uniforms and received citations. [REDACTED]

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But although the new arms on display were tangible proof that the defense industries, with sufficient foreign technology, can produce at least some of the modern weapons desperately sought by the armed forces, there are many other critical deficiencies which the new weapons will not alleviate. The Chinese

[REDACTED]

still have no mobile, radar-guided air defense guns or tactical low-to-medium altitude surface-to-air missiles--crucial components of ground force maneuver divisions and China's Air Force consists largely of bombers and fighters of 1950s and 1960s vintage. China's newest fighter was not even displayed. The twin-engine F-8 has been troubled by poor aerodynamics, a heavy airframe, outmoded avionics, and underpowered engines. Other notable weaknesses include modern electronic warfare, command, control and communications, and improved armor protection on combat vehicles. [REDACTED]

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As a result, we expect a continuing debate in Beijing over the best road to weapons modernization. With so many critical gaps, Chinese military critics of the defense industries are pressing for some foreign weapons purchases. Recent reports from the US attache in Beijing, for example, suggest that the General Staff Department of the PLA approves of purchasing the US I-TOW missile. China's Ministry of Ordnance, however, believes it can satisfy the Army's needs by acquiring only some of the I-TOW's component technology to improve its own HJ-8 missile. [REDACTED]

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